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## Educational Writings

### REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

*The progress of education.*—Within the past generation a number of general histories of education have been published. The publication<sup>1</sup> under review is notable because it is the first to depart considerably from conventional standards and points of view. Professor Cubberley states in his Preface that he has “not tried to prepare another history of educational theories. Of such we already have a sufficient number. Instead, I have tried to prepare a history of the progress and practice and organization of education itself, and to give to such a history its proper setting, as a phase of the history of the development and spread of our Western civilization.” It should be a source of great satisfaction to those interested in the real history of education that at last we have formal acknowledgment by a recognized leader of the profession that the history of educational theories bears essentially the same relation to educational history as does the history of economic theories to economic history, or the history of political theories to political history, or the history of theology to religious history.

The work is in four parts: first, the ancient world, with chapters on Greek and Roman education and the contribution of Christianity; second, the medieval world, with accounts of education in the early Middle Ages, of influences promoting the revival of learning, and of the rise of the universities; third, the transition from medieval to modern attitudes, with chapters on the revival of learning and the educational results of this movement, as well as of the Protestant revolts among the Lutherans, Anglicans, Calvinists, and Catholics, in Europe, England, and America; other chapters are on the rise of scientific inquiry and scientific method in the schools, and on the theory and practice of education in the middle of the eighteenth century; fourth, modern times, with chapters on forces influencing education in the eighteenth century, national organization of education on the continent and in England and America, new theories and subject-matter of the elementary school, the American struggle for free state schools, and new conceptions and tendencies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

<sup>1</sup> ELLWOOD P. CUBBERLEY, *The History of Education*. Pp. xi+849. *Readings in the History of Education*. Pp. xxi+684. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920.

This work is too voluminous and space is too limited to discuss matters of detail. We can only comment on the larger features and important characteristics, and give a few illustrations. We may note at the outset that the volume is designed as a textbook with the usual limitations characteristic of this form of exposition. Most of the subject-matter is already more or less familiar, drawn from secondary authorities, and without specific reference to authorities for facts or for numerous broad and sweeping generalizations and inferences. The material is drawn very largely from English and American writers or matter printed in the English language. There is little evidence that the author has used much of the monographic studies by French, German, Italian, and other European writers, though there is a very considerable literature on the subject for ancient, medieval, and modern education. There is little or no attempt to evaluate the sources of information, or to apply in general what is known as the historical method among modern historians. What we do have is a presentation and reorganization of the better-known facts of educational history in certain selected countries, written from a new standpoint with a new emphasis. And after all, this is about all that one man could do in so large a field of knowledge covering so long a period. With these limitations, the reviewer believes that the author has written the best book yet produced by an American in this field, in spite of further criticisms to follow, by setting forth the most essential facts of educational development in an interesting manner, by giving these facts a better setting than heretofore, and by emphasizing those political, economic, religious, and social forces which have influenced and help explain educational progress or lack of progress.

In matters of detail, and in some cases in matters of larger importance, the author is often in error, since neither he nor anyone can have exact knowledge in so many fields both of the educational and the general history of different countries. For example, the author's treatment of feudal society (p. 165) and conditions as affecting the training of the nobility is quite out of harmony with the best thought on this subject. The feudal system was far from being only "organized anarchy," and it was not the duty of peasants to fight the battles of their lords. Arming the peasants would be much like arming the negro slaves in the ante-bellum period. Again, the description of religious conditions in America (p. 357) is certainly incorrect when he states that "practically all these early religious groups came to America in little congregations bringing their ministers with them." To take only one example, the scarcity of ministers among the German Lutherans and Reformed peoples was notorious up to the Revolution. Again, the author asserts that "the Massachusetts laws of 1642 and 1647 were continued in force" in New Hampshire after separation from Massachusetts (p. 367). This is not true. The act of 1642 was never in force in New Hampshire after the separation, and it was not until 1719-21 that acts were passed that embodied the principles of the act of 1647. It is not true that in "Virginia and the other colonies to the South the no-business-of-the-state attitude toward education by the mother

country was copied." One has only to read the educational legislation of the southern colonies before the Revolution to see how overdrawn this sweeping statement is. Easy generalizations of this sort, unsupported by evidence, so characteristic a feature of textbooks, perpetuate a great deal of misinformation about our educational history. Nevertheless, the reviewer is in agreement with many of the important statements of fact and generalizations. The fact that there are some errors is more than offset by the great number of facts and inferences that are essentially true. The period from 1860 on seems to be inadequately treated from the point of view of a usable text in this important period of educational history. The second volume provides a series of documents from original sources and extracts from secondary sources of great value and interest, particularly from the earlier period. They parallel the text closely and have some of its virtues and defects. The make-up of these volumes is excellent. Numerous illustrations, maps, references to other sources for collateral reading, suggestive questions, etc., are given.

In conclusion, we may say that this work is the best textbook yet produced in this subject, and should be of great value in giving educational history a better standing in the curriculum, and in giving students of education a better knowledge of the forces that have influenced educational progress and of the part that education has played in the progress of civilization.

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*An experimental analysis of reading.*—Experimentation in the field of reading is constantly penetrating farther into the details of the reading process. A recent contribution to this line of investigation made by Dr. Buswell<sup>1</sup> is in natural sequence and can be fully appreciated only in connection with the series of experimental studies of reading ("Supplementary Educational Monographs," Vol. I, Nos. 1, 2, 5; Vol. II, No. 4) of which it is a part. But, while practically the same apparatus was used as in former studies, a quite independent phase of investigation was undertaken, and the author has effectively concentrated attention on the next significant problem in the teaching of reading. The significance of the report for secondary schools is accentuated by the fact that twenty-four of the fifty-four subjects were selected from the high-school group, three good readers and three poor readers from each grade.

The monograph leads the reader definitely to the conclusion that the attainment of skill in oral reading is coupled with the ability to keep the eye well ahead of the voice. In all grades the good readers show on the average a wider eye-voice span than the poor readers. Those who have the wider span make fewer errors and show in general more regard for thought units. The author explains this fact clearly: "A subject with a wide span has an

<sup>1</sup> G. T. BUSWELL, *An Experimental Study of the Eye-Voice Span in Reading*. "Supplementary Educational Monographs," No. 17. Chicago: Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1920. Pp. xii+106. \$1.00.